



News Release

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For Immediate Release

TAKE A WALK ON THE DARK SIDE AT SPOOKY CALIFORNIA EVENTS

(SACRAMENTO, Calif.)— There is more to Halloween than the cackles of witches and groans of monsters. Destinations throughout California offer a wide variety of eerie special events, including pumpkin festivals, fright walks, haunted mansions, and hotel tours and theme parks complete with cobwebs and ghoulish characters.

“Fall is an ideal time to visit California,” said Executive Director Caroline Beteta of the California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC). “The weather is fantastic, crowds are minimal and there are plenty of Halloween thrills and chills.”

In Petaluma, part of the **North Coast Region**, revelers navigate the four-acre A-Mazing Corn Maze off Stony Point Road. The maze is open daily throughout October and takes 30 minutes to complete. Visitors can also search the nearby seven-acre Petaluma Pumpkin Patch or stroll the marketplace for 16 varieties of squash and nine

varieties of gourds. The area also offers BBQs and a straw mountain for climbing. Also in Petaluma is a docent-guided cemetery walk on October 28, as well as a Halloween House Tour on October 29 complete with skeletons, spiders and spooky surprises. In Willits, the Willits Shakespeare Company will host a Haunted House in October. The 2nd Annual Occidental Harvest Market Festival in Occidental is October 27-28 and includes children's Halloween parade, scarecrow contest, face painting and farmers market. Both Arcata and Eureka offer annual Halloween Carnivals on October 31 that include trick or treating, creepy-crawly events and contests. It's the season to be scared and visitors may also want to take a trip to Willow Creek, a mountain village known for its many nearby Sasquatch sightings. If you don't see Bigfoot, travelers can explore the local Bigfoot Museum, which sports a giant sculpture of the hairy missing link and other artifacts.

Balboa Park, located in the **San Diego County Region**, is the nation's largest urban cultural park. This year, the park offers the Haunted Trail of Balboa Park, which winds past graveyards and ghosts, September 29 through October 31. The Reuben H. Fleet Science Center's Haunted Planetarium is a ghostly pre-show that plays before the last IMAX film of the day throughout October. Ghost aficionados will enjoy the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, where a beautiful woman checked in November of 1892 and has never checked out. Witnesses report flickering lights, dramatic shifts in room temperatures, unexplained voices and objects moving of their own accord. San Diego's Whaley house in Old Town State Historical Park is also considered a spooky residence. According to the "Travel Channel's America's Most Haunted Houses," it's the number one haunted house in the United States. There is also Ghostly Tours in History, which provides a frightening three-hour adventure that takes San Diego guests to some of the

oldest haunts in the city. Wear your best Halloween costume to the 8th Annual Brick-or-Treat celebration at LEGOLAND California in Carlsbad for Halloween-themed activities taking place the weekends of October 21-22 and 28-29.

In the **Central Valley Region**, the Hillcrest Farms Pumpkin Patch is open the last three weekends in October, as well as steam rides, nature trails, play areas and picnic sites. Also in Reedley is Satterstrom's Pumpkin Festival and Haunt with daytime activities, such as hayrides, petting zoo and pumpkin patch, opening October 1. Brave souls can visit the Haunted Forest, Howling Haunted House and Spooktacular Hayride evenings starting October 13.

Pumpkins topping 1,000 pounds are one of the many highlights at the Half Moon Bay Art and Pumpkin Festival in the **San Francisco Bay Area Region**. The event is considered the world's largest pumpkin festival and will celebrate its 25th season October 14-15. The wicked lineup includes a Great Pumpkin Parade, a weigh-off of gargantuan pumpkins, haunted house, carving and costume contests, fun runs, scarecrow contest, crafts and food. In Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk features a Fright Walk with rotating tunnel exit, as well as Halloween Laser Tag. Tales of local shipwrecks, whale ghost stories, nighttime tours, costumes and scavenger hunts make up an evening of family fun as the Seymour Center at Long Marine Lab in Santa Cruz is transformed into Shipwreck Island on October 27. In Santa Clara, visitors celebrate the family-friendly spirit of Halloween during Nick-or-Treat, a six-day extravaganza at Paramount's Great America, where children can trick or treat alongside the characters from Nickelodeon. Pier 39 in San Francisco offers ghoulish behavior as kids in costume trick or treat at Pumpkin Pandemonium on October 29. In Berkeley, the Claremont Resort &

Spa offers the Spirits, Spooks and Sweethearts package from October 9 to November 5, which includes accommodations, ghostly historical tour and dinner. A Trick or Treat Costume Parade is scheduled for October 28 in downtown Napa.

Six Flags Marine World in Vallejo transforms itself from a theme park to a scream park for the annual Fright Fest, which includes a haunted house and other spooky activities. Fright Fest is open Fridays through Sundays September 29 to October 29. An estimated 250,000 celebrants will flock to San Francisco for Halloween in the Castro, one of the world's largest costume parties, scheduled for October 31. The event starts at dusk at Market and Octavia streets with the March of Light parade.

In San Jose, the Winchester Mystery House is one of the oldest and most noted of haunted houses in California, dating back to 1884. The 160-room Victorian mansion was built by the heiress of the Winchester Rifle fortune after a psychic told her that she could only escape the wrath of the ghosts, those killed by Winchester rifles, by building a house that would never be completed. Visitors and staff have reported hearing organ music and whispering sounds, as well as lights going on and off. Special activities are scheduled for Halloween, including rare evening flashlight tours. Visitors can also relive “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” October 27-28 in Felton on the Roaring Camp Railroad Ghost Train.

After dark, things get lively at Wild Things animal facility in Monterey, part of the **Central Coast Region**, especially during the annual Halloween Flashlight Tour (weekends in October). A costumed tour guide leads visitors through the grounds, relating myths and facts about exotic wild animals. Refreshments follow, plus a photo opportunity with a “scary” Halloween animal. Also in Monterey is the Ghost Walk of Old Monterey, scheduled for October, where visitors take a nighttime walking tour of the

area's most haunted cemeteries and spine-tingling sites. In Oxnard, the 3rd Annual Ghost Stories at the Square takes place select weekends in October at the historic Heritage Square. The resident Elite Theatre Company leads visitors through a haunting walk back in time presented by ghosts representing famous and infamous characters from history.

In Anaheim, part of the **Orange County Region**, the witching hour of midnight September 29 will mark the beginning of Disney's HalloweenTime, an all-new seasonal event at Disneyland Resort with whimsical décor, costumed Disney characters and interactive Halloween activities for the whole family. The event runs through October 31.

San Juan Capistrano is said to be one of the most haunted cities in the state. Ghosts, including the White Lady of San Juan Capistrano, La Llorona and Phantom of Del Obispo, have haunted the city's streets for the last 100 years. Ghost hunters will also enjoy a Haunted Walking Tour in downtown Fullerton in September and October where they'll visit historic haunted landmarks such as the Plummer Auditorium. In Huntington Beach, the Halloween Celebration on Main Street takes place October 31 and includes a moon bounce, air slides, pony and hayrides, petting zoo and Halloween costume contest. Knott's Scary Farm's Halloween Haunt in Buena Park brings the dead to life during selected dates throughout October. Special events include chilling mazes, hair-raising shows, scare zones and roving monsters.

In the **High Sierra Region**, many settlers quickly vacated small towns throughout California leaving behind more than 50 ghost towns, including Bodie in Mono County located about six miles south of Bridgeport. Gold was discovered here in 1859 and the town's population soon peaked to 10,000. Bodie's last mine closed in 1941, but the school, jail, bank, and several churches still remain. The "White Lady," a distraught

woman who hanged herself after her finance was killed during the Gold Rush, haunts the Bridgeport Inn. In Lake Tahoe, the Village at Squaw Valley celebrates the spooky season with the Great Pumpkin Festival October 21-31 with a haunted house, candle making, trick or treating and doggy costume contest. Big Bear Lake hosts Halloween in the Village October 31 when businesses shut down Main Street, transforming the area into a gigantic gathering of goblins, witches, fairies and ghouls for trick or treating. Thousands of children attend with their parents each year. In the Yosemite Valley, ghost hunters will want to lodge at the Wawona Hotel, where sightings of a pilot – who crashed nearby in the 1920s – have been reported. The nearby Ahwahnee Hotel is considered haunted and includes ghosts and a moving rocking chair once used by President Kennedy during his stay in 1962, despite the fact the chair was removed after the President’s departure.

The 19th Annual West Hollywood Halloween Costume Carnival, part of the **Los Angeles County Region**, is the largest Halloween street party in the world. The event is set for October 31 and will draw 450,000 people to the streets of Santa Monica Boulevard to enjoy the craziest, most eccentric costume creations ever. There’s also live entertainment, “drag” races, pumpkin carving contests and children’s activities. The Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach celebrates Halloween the weekend of October 28-29 with hair-raising activities, including creepy crafts, freaky face painting and spine chilling storytelling. Kids are invited to come dressed as an underwater creature or in traditionally ghoulish attire. It’s no trick; Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier will treat all guests dressed in pirate gear to a free round of miniature golf at the Pirates’ Pier Mini Golf from October 28 through October 31. Located at Seaside Park (Ventura County Fairgrounds), Seaside Haunt in Ventura is Ventura County’s largest haunted house

attraction for 2006. Built by professional Hollywood set designers, the walk-through attraction is an elaborate maze of a swamp, caves, as well as a 3D section. It's open September 29-30, and October 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, and 24-31.

In the **Shasta Cascade Region**, Butte County offers the Book Family Farm Harvest Festival in Durham beginning October 15 with a pumpkin patch, hay maze and scarecrow display. Near Redding, the Nash Pumpkin Patch Harvest Festival is scheduled for weekends throughout October and includes carriage and pony rides, corn maze, train rides, craft booths and pumpkins. In Weaverville, bring your flashlight for the cemetery tour October 28.

Voted best event in Riverside for 2005, the California Riverside Ballet's Ghostwalk, located in the **Inland Empire Region**, brings the downtown area alive with stories of horror, mystery and intrigue October 27-28. Guests are led through the historic district in the shadows of the Mission Inn and hear spine tingling to comic renditions of tales from beyond. This is a family-friendly event.

The CTTC is a non-profit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs - in partnership with the state's travel industry - that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. California is currently the number one travel destination in the country. According to the CTTC, travel and tourism expenditures total \$82.5 billion annually in California, support jobs for nearly 900,000 Californians and generate \$5.2 billion in state and local tax revenues. For more information about the CTTC and for a free California vacation packet, go to www.visitcalifornia.com or call 800-862-2543 (domestic) or 916-444-4429 (international).

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